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Nature Lyrics

Martha Martin

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NATURE LYRICS

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

MARTHA MARTIN

"And what is writ is writ —
Would it were worthier."—Byron

BOSTON
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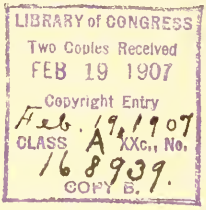

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Dedicated to My Mother

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SONNET

Far down the western slope the weary day
Looks out upon the world with dreamy eyes,
As o'er her sunny curls she loosely ties
Her crimson hood, and gently slips away;
Meanwhile from out the east the twilight grey
Lingers a moment, till the embracing skies
Enfold her—for the solemn Night doth rise,
Descending like a monk in dark array
Of long, black, flowing gown, and piously
He utters prayers in soft, low murmurings;
Then Earth takes up her dewdrop rosary,
And contrite at his feet herself she flings,
While on the altar of blue Heaven high,
Each little star a golden censor swings.

SUNDAY

In the valley deep and lowly
  Breathes a heavenly Sabbath peace;
On the silent hills so holy,
  Voices bid all tumult cease.

And the babbling brooklet rushing
  With impetuous hurry by,
Leaping, sparkling, gurgling, gushing,
  Murmurs gently, "God is nigh."

Zephyrs, on their flight so airy,
  Waft their message from above;
Whispering softly, never weary,
  "God is full of grace and love."

Little birds, their swift course winging,
  Send their offerings to the sky;

In their sweetest rich tones singing
Songs of praise to him on high.

And a holy calm is stealing
Over all the earth to-day,
God, Himself to man revealing,
Pointing out the heavenly way.

CHRISTMAS MORNING

Oh! the joy of Christmas morning.
Through the keen and frosty air,
Bells ring out the birth of Jesus,
Welcome tidings everywhere.

What a gift the world receiveth
With the coming of His reign;
Peace, good-will, to men He bringeth—
Paradise on earth again.

Heart to heart responds in gladness,
Loving deeds are spread abroad,
Drawing nearer to his neighbor,
Man draws nearer unto God.

With what tributes shall we honor
Christ, the Lord, who is our king,
On this holiest birthday morning,
What shall be our offering?

Love, obedience, faith, we bring Him,
As the great, wise men of old
Brought their costly gifts to Jesus,
Myrrh, and frankincense, and gold.

Come, oh, Christ-child, dwell within us,
Let our hearts Thy manger be,

Where we may in adoration,
Consecrate our lives to Thee.

Oh! the joy of Christmas morning,
Through the keen and frosty air,
Bells ring out the birth of Jesus,
Welcome tidings everywhere.

ST. VALENTINE

I

St. Valentine was an old locksmith by trade
Who lived in a district near Rome,
He owned a small shop to which year after year,
The youths of the village would come.

II

For here in this shop hung for all who would buy,
Strings of wonderful magical keys
With power to unlock any fair maiden's heart,
The youth it might happen to please.

III

But only once yearly these keys were for sale,
So he who a maiden would win,
Must needs on the fourteenth of February go
To purchase from St. Valentine.

IV

And thousands of keys on that morning were sold,
As each ardent youth thither flocked,

Affections were plighted and love pledges made,
As hearts all responsive unlocked.

V

But these days are over, the dear Saint is dead,
Sweet maids not so easily won,
A race of winged Cupids to earth has come down,
And love's work is differently done.

VI

A bow and a quiver of arrows they bear,
These swift sportive boys, at their side,
And fiercely they aim at each tender young heart,
Their shafts flying off far and wide.

VII

They wound, but they kindle the flame of true love
No arrow e'er pierces in vain,—
Alas! that no heart can be conquered these days,
Without some infliction of pain.

TRUST

I know not if beyond the blue
And ever-placid sky,
A home of perfect love and peace
Awaits me when I die,

Where sin and darkness are no more,
Nor man shall grieve nor sigh,
And God will wipe away the tears
From every mortal eye;

Where Christ shall bid the weary soul,
  Sore-laden and oppressed,
To come to him, and he will give
  Them sweet, eternal rest.

I know not if Death bears away
  Our loved ones to that goal,
Nor if the circle broken here
  Be in that home made whole.

But this I know: that God is love,
  He lives and cares for all;
Our souls are his, our bodies, too,—
  He guards us, great and small.

Thus, while no more to mortal sight
  Our loved one doth appear,
I known that in God's arm of love
  He lives from year to year.

In filial reverence, I yield
  Unto my Father's will.
Conscious that he is wise and good,
  I live, and trust him still.

APRIL

Offspring of Spring, thou whose life-giving breath
Wakens the earth from her long-seeming death,
Winter has fled at the sight of thy face.
Hail, O thou month full of beauty and grace!

Blithely the robin, in gay plumage dressed,
Chirps to his mate, busied weaving her nest;
Swallows, long absent, their flight hither wing,
Happy to welcome thee, sweet child of Spring.

Buds of bright promise burst forth from each tree;
Violet and snowdrop peep out smilingly;
Heaven broods fondly o'er earth, like a dove;
Everything living tells only of love.

April, thou babe full of laughter and tears,
Innocent art thou of man's griefs and fears:
Buoyant, light-hearted, thy days glide away,
Blooming at length into flowery May.

SONG

(From the German of Heine)

I

The light blue eyes of smiling Spring
  Peep out among the grass;
These are the sweet young violets
  I gather as I pass;

II

I gather them while yearning thoughts
  Rise in my heart anon,
And all my thoughts the nightingale
  Sings out in loudest tone.

III

Yes, loudly warbles she my thoughts,
  So that they echo too;
My tender secret now is known
  The whole wide forest through.

SPRING'S AWAKENING

Above the ground they raise their heads,
  Blue violet and anemone,
Proclaiming from their earthy beds
  New life, and more abundantly.

The winter storms are all forgot;
  And snowflakes vanish one by one,
Melting in tears as they are shot
  By golden arrows of the sun,

The very bosom of Heaven on high
  Is heaving with fresh, conscious breath;
And birds in choirs sing out and cry,
  There is no death, there is no death.

SLUMBER SONG

Sleep, my darling; sleep, my son,
  Close thine eyes, my little one,
Nestled at thy mother's breast,
  Be at rest, at rest.

All about us is so still,
  And the sun far down the hill,
Blowing out his great, red light,
  Calls ' good-night, good-night. '

Cradled on thy mother's arm,
  Nought shall come to thee of harm,
Hush my baby, sink to sleep,
  Soft and deep, and deep.

Birds into their nests have flown,
  Weary flowers their heads hang down.

Stars shine dimly in the sky,
Rock-a-bye, a-bye.

Eyelids drooped and cheeks quite flushed,
See my child in dreams now hushed,
Watch o'er him, kind Power above,
With thy love, Thy love.

THE NUN

(*Translated from the German of Uhland*)

In the quiet convent garden stole one eve a virgin nun.
The moon cast all its rays upon her as she walked alone.
And on her lashes lingered tears of silent, tender love,
Which she had shed for one whose spirit passed from earth above.

Ah! 'tis well for me that he has died, that faithful lover mine,
For I may love him ever more with love pure and divine,
He is an angel holy, clothed in robes of spotless white,
And it's not wrong to love the angels of celestial light.

With timid step and saddened mien, she moved to where there stood
An image of St. Mary beaming in the light of God,
The moonlight threw a halo o'er her saintly, sacred head,
She looked with such a mild and kindly love upon the maid.

At her feet the pious nun fell down, and clasped he
hands in prayer,
Looked up in calm and heavenly peace to find an
answer there;
And as she tends her gaze still upwards with a heart's
true faith,
Her flowing veil enshrouds her, and her eyelids close
in death.

MIND AND HEART

A quarrel rose 'twixt Mind and Heart,
And both agreed that they would part.

Reserved and cold, Mind his way went
To joy and pain indifferent;

In vain to win men's grace he strove,
In vain—as he was void of love.

And Heart, impulsive, unrestrained—
No favour from the world obtained;

Her nature passionate and hot
Was checked by neither sense nor thought.

And so, at length, both Mind and Heart
Declare they cannot live apart.

Linked hand-in-hand their course must lie
To make life's perfect harmony.

TWO PICTURES

I

When leaving my home for a voyage
  Two pictures I carried with me,
The one was the mother's sweet likeness,
  The other my children three.

II

I brought these to gladden and cheer me,
  When lonliness in me would rise,
Yet why when I gaze on these faces
  Do hot tears rush, flooding my eyes?

A SNOW-FLAKE

Dainty little snow-flake,
  Fluttering through the air
Till you lie upon the ground
  White and pure and fair.
But the sun is shining now,
  You are gone again.
Tell me, starry snow-flake,
  Was your life in vain?

High ideals and prospects
  Filled my longing soul,
Noble aims and deeds I planned
  As my wished for goal.
But by unforeseen events
  All my hopes are slain;
Then I wonder whether
  Striving is in vain.

TO——

The Earth is veiled in twilight's gloom
  The sun's red light is gone,
And in the stillness here I muse
  Alone, alone.

My mind dwells fondly o'er the past,
  When Fortune gave the boon
Of a dear friend, who left me, ah!
  Too soon, too soon.

'Twas in the Spring-time we first met,
  My gentle friend and I;
And oh! how happily the hours
  Flew by, flew by!

But Fate has set us far apart,
  And here, within my home,
So often times I long for her
  To come, to come.

Shall I gaze in those soulful eyes,
  And clasp that hand again?
Or shines, my brilliant Star of Hope,
  In vain, in vain?

I cannot tell, but trust that yet
  United I shall be,
In closer friendship, warmer love,
  With thee, with thee.

And though hot tears mine eyelids fill,
  "All worketh for the best;"
Content, we love each other still,
  I rest, I rest.

VIOLETS

Voilets of the early springtime,
From your moist and earthy beds,
I have come this morn to take you,
In a pretty nosegay make you,
Do not sadly hang your heads.

All your sisters and your brothers
Shall be gathered by me, too,
Those in dresses white, so snowy,
And the purple ones more showy,
Crowned with gems of sparkling dew.

There I have you all together,
Fragrant flowers, shy and sweet!
I shall take you to a maiden
Pale and helpless and care-laden,
With what joy she you will greet!

'Tis your mission, lovely violets,
To delight the eye of man;
And where'er a heart you brighten,
By your presence some load lighten,
You fulfil life's highest plan.

THE WIND'S LAMENT

Alas! sad wind, what grief is thine,
That thou dost evermore repine?
In vain I long to have thee cease.
What sorrow robs thee of thy peace,
That, rushing on with heaving breast,
Thy aching heart can find no rest?

And doth the chaste-eyed daisy know
The secret cause of all thy woe?
For she, with signs drawn full and deep,
Hath wept herself at length to sleep;
While on her lashes long and white
An undried tear lies glistening bright.

The stars, fair birds of paradise,
In flocks are scattered through the skies,
Their gentle slumbers broken by
The woful tenor of thy cry;
And so these poor, half-frightened things
Flutter all night their golden wings.

Art thou then doomed to wander on,
In never-ending wail and moan?
Art thou pursued by some dire fate,
That brings thee to this frenzied state?
Say, wind, what unknown grief is thine,
That thou dost evermore repine?

WE THREE

(*Translated from the German*)

In yonder vale a little flower,
I see in silent sweetness grow;
And that—art thou.

Within its cup a butterfly,
Swings to and fro so happily;
And that—is he.

A weeping willow over both
Bends solemnly its branches high;
And that—am I.

NOVEMBER

The leaves npon the cold, damp ground,
All brown and withered lie,
While overhead dull, leaden clouds
Obscure the bright, blue sky.

The naked trees stretch forth their arms
Protection to implore,
And wailing winds are mourning now,
That summer is no more.

The swollen river dark and deep,
Moves slowly to the sea;
While Time with his resistless step
Sinks in eternity.

Alas poor earth! that lately shone
In richest, rosiest bloom:
In this thy destined end, this woe
Thy melancholy doom?

Ah, no! when winter's spell is o'er.
Thy face will smile again,
And spring with new-born joy descend
To cheer the heart of man.

THE ORPHAN'S PRAYER

O Father of fatherless children
Look down in compassion, I pray,
And let me feel, Lord, that thy blessing
Is resting upon me to-day.

Thou knowest I need thy protection,
For other save thine have I none;

Then visit me in my affliction,
An orphan left helpless and lone.

Alone must I live to encounter
A world that seems heartless and cold,
And out of the depths I am calling
"Uphold me, oh Father, uphold."

For Thou art the infinite pity,
To Thee, every creature is dear,
Thine arms everlasting surround us,
Then why should we lose faith, or fear?

I mourn for the loved thou hast taken,
Though conscious thy will is the best;
I mourn, but I trust in thy goodness,
And leave to thee, Father, the rest.

DEATH-MUSIC

(*Translated from the German of Uhland*)

"What music wakes me, sweet and low
Out of my still repose?
O mother, see! dost thou not know
What sounds so late are those?"

"I can hear nought, and nought I see.
Oh, slumber soft and mild!
No one is singing now to thee,
My darling, suffering child."

"No earthly music can it be
That makes my soul delight:
It is the angels calling me,—
O mother dear, good-night.

A SONG OF SPRING

Spring has come with sprightly footsteps,
  Lending joy to hill and glen.
Daffodil and purple violet
  Bloom out from the soil again.

Spring has come. Each tree rejoices
  In its budding life once more:
Earth has never seemed more winsome,
  Nor so nigh to heaven before.

Happy songs of thrush and linnet
  Fill the sweetly scented air;
And my bosom swells with gladness,
  Living in a world so fair.

Weary wanderer, grievous mourner,
  Let all care and sorrow flee!
Come, oh, come, at Spring's kind bidding,
  Join the season's jubilee!

THE PUSH INTO HEAVEN

(*From the Prose of Rau*)

In the town of Vienna a mansion there stands,
  To which a strange name has been given,
For above on the door, on a tablet of stone,
  Is written, 'The push into Heaven.'
Once there dwelt in this house, so the story relates,
  A woman most wondrously fair,
In her beanty a Venus—a Juno in form,
  With whom no one else could compare.

But, alas! for her pride and her vanity, too,
Her days she would fritter away
In adorning herself with her jewels and dress,
Her friends to outdo in display.
Well, one midnight a knocking was heard at the door,
She opened, when what did she see,
But a crone with a crutch and a basket in hand,
Who called out in tones haughtily:

'Ha! what are your gowns and your finery to this?
See, here, all in crimson and gold!'
And she held out a robe and a girdle most rare,
That dazzled the eyes to behold.
'Oh, but give these to me,' the fair woman implored,
'And name any price that you please,'
'Very well," said the hag, 'I a bargain will make,
Though money shall not be the fees.'

'I will lend you these garments for three days and nights
If on the third midnight you pay,
For their use just whatever is covered by them,'
She replied, 'I will do as you say.'
So for three days and nights this proud woman was seen
Arrayed in her splendor of dress,
She was envied by court ladies, princesses, too,
Nor whence came such clothes could they guess.

But at last it was over, the hour drew near,
The bargain so strange must be made,
Dark forebodings and fears now possessed our proud dame,
Some horrible plot had been laid.
So she hastened to throw off the borrowed red robe,
Alas! it clung to her: in vain

Did she clutch at and tear at the brilliant light folds
The dress upon her would remain.

All her past life of folly and pride now returned,
Too late she repented her sin,
For the clock had struck twelve and the door opened wide,
The hag, laughing wildly, walked in.
' It is you whom my dress covers, girl, you are mine,'
The hag into Satan then grew,
While a flame rose and turned the red garb into fire,
The poor stricken dame burning, too.

In despair to Saint Barbara loudly she called,
And vowed to repent of her pride,
To become a pure Magdalen, simple and good,
' O! save me, Saint Barbara,' she cried.
And behold, the Saint heard her, for Satan in glee,
Was seizing the victim he craved,
When Saint Barbara pushed her with might into Heaven,
The cock crowed—the woman was saved.

PRIDE AND HUMILITY

A brown caterpillar was creeping one day
On the bough of a linden-tree,
When a bright yellow butterfly, passing that way,
Alighted, the insect to see.

" How ugly, oh dear! and how clumsy you are,
With not even a pair of wings!
I'm sure to be dead would be better by far
Than one of those dark, crawling things."

" 'Tis true, pretty butterfly, I am not fair,
But am lowly and humble by birth;
Yet for some useful purpose I surely am here,
My place I must fill on the earth."

The butterfly only looked scornful and said:
" See my beautiful wings of gauze.
I can fly, and sip food from white flowers and red.
Oh! made to adorn earth I was."

He then flew away to a rose-bush in bloom,
Where a boy with a muslin net
Caught the butterfly fast in its folds; and his doom,
Alas! unexpected he met.

The meek caterpillar had slipped out of sight
Till he woke up one morn in July,
In a state of such ecstasy, joy and delight,
A pearly-winged, white butterfly.

SPRING

Once more the fields are clad in green,
The skies are blue and fair,
And violets sweet their fragrance waft
Throughout the balmy air.

Once more I hear the blithesome birds
Pour forth their happy song,
They wing their flight from tree to tree,
And carol all day long.

Yea, all the earth is glad and bright
For spring has come again,
But ah! her beauty and her charms
Greet me in vain, in vain.

There's one dear face I loved so well
I never more shall see,
So do not wonder, gentle spring,
I find no joy in thee.

SONG

(*From the German of Reinick*)

I, foolish maiden,
Ah! I love thee,
And know not even,
If thou lovest me!
I asked tall flowers,
And small ones, oh!
They mostly answered,
And told me, 'No!'—
These stupid flowers have n'er been taught,
What it means, what it means,
'He loves me not.'

I, foolish maiden,
Ah! I love thee,
And fancy ever,
That thou lov'st me.
I asked my heart!—
'Cans't thou then guess'?
It answered gladly
'He loves thee—yes!
Oh, heart, thou knowest,
'Thou best cans't see,
What it means, what it means,
'He loveth me.'

OUT OF THE NIGHT

When, with flaming torch in hand,
  Day steals softly toward the west,
Over all the shadowy land
  Gloom and darkness rest.
Then a thousand kindly eyes,
  Gleaming from their heights above,
Look down 'neath the sombre skies
  In tender, pitying love,
Holding vigil through the night
Till the dawn of morning light.

When the world lies cold and bare,
  After autumn's swift decay,
Lo! the earth grows white and fair,
  As in blossoming May.
For, from flowers that bloom on high,
  Countless, starry petals fall,
Fill the ground, the air, and sky,
  Until they cover all,
Winter 'neath her snowy wing,
Hiding for awhile the Spring.

So, in human life's dark hour,
  When the heart seems crushed with pain,
Some benign, consoling Power
  Quickly cheers again.
Oft by trials, griefs, and woes
  Man becomes more strong and brave,
Readier to give to those
  Who love and mercy crave.
Thus earth's deepest sorrows shine
With a purpose all divine.

"AND DID THE LITTLE FLOWERS BUT KNOW"

(*From the German of Heine*)

And did the little flowers but know
The anguish of my heart,
Their tears would surely fall and flow
To heal the wounded part.

And if the nightingales but knew
My bitter pain and grief,
They gladly would console me through
Their song—and bring relief.

And could the golden stars on high
Be conscious of my woe,
They would come out from yonder sky
To comfort me below.

But none of these can know, ah me!
The cause of all my pain;—
It is but known to one, and *she*
Hath rent my heart in twain.

CHRISTMAS BELLS

Christmas bells are ringing gladly,
Let all hearts rejoice today,—
Christ is born, new hope He bringeth,
Christ, who is the truth, the way.

Now to earth God's Kingdom cometh,
And a little child is King.
Oh, this happy Christmas morning,
All the world is welcoming!

Through the din of earthly battles,
Through the trumpet's blast and call,
Hark! the angel's message soundeth—
Is it, then, a mockery all?

No, the tidings come not vainly,
For goodwill to men, and peace
Will at length prevail and triumph,
And all strife and tumult cease.

Ring, then, bells, your gladdest paeons,
Christ the Lord is born today.
Let all hearts with joy receive him;
Trust him, love him, and obey.

THE BEE AND THE ROSE

I

A bee once settled upon a rose,
Humming 'how fair thou art';
The rose, blushing deeply, looked up and smiled,
And the bee nestled close to her heart.

II

'How fair and sweet,' and he lingered there,
Kissing her o'er and o'er,
Till lo, on a sudden he raised his wings,
Flew afar and was seen no more.

III

The rose in vain for her lover sighed,
Paler she grew each day,
Till one sunny morn all her petals drooped,
And she faded from Earth away.

LOVE WILL LAST

The red rose blooms the summer through,
  Until the autumn blast
Robs the sweet flower of scent and hue,
  And then its life is past,
But thou, O Love, art strong and true,—
  Thou, Love, wilt last, wilt last.

The moon shines out, and o'er the night
  Bright silvery rays are cast.
At length it fades; for morning light
  O'ertakes the night how fast,
But thou, O Love, art filled with might,—
  Thou, Love, wilt last, wilt last.

O human heart, 'tis at thy shrine
  Love pays its homage vast.
The sweetest gift on earth is thine,
  The deepest joy thou hast,
For love is changeless and divine,
  And *love will last*, *will last*.

TO A CAGED BIRD

Sing on, sweet warbler, sing.
Thy rich and melting melody I hear,
And gratefully accept the joy and cheer
  Thy matchless carols bring.

Would'st thou exchange thy lot,
And purchase freedom with life's daily care,
While now both food and shelter are thy share,
  Unbidden and unsought?

For cruel seems thy fate,
Hemmed in by gilded bars that check thy flight,

Where thy fleet wings may never test their might,
And skyward seek heaven's gate.

O feathered prisoner,
Thy lot is known to many a human soul
Whose spirit wings in vain stretch towards some goal
Some higher, loftier sphere.

Minds generous and great,
By custom and by circumstances chained,
Their purposes in life all unattained.
Held in this captive state.

I learn, O bird, from thee,
In listening to thy thrilling, gladsome voice,
Whatever be my lot, still to rejoice,
And though in bonds, feel free.

A NEW YEAR'S EVE

(Translated from the German of Richter)

'Twas New Year's Eve, the Earth was wrapped
In winter's mantle, soft and white.
The sky was of the deepest blue,
With stars that glistened clear and bright.
And at the window of his room,
An aged man with snowy hair,
Stood gazing out with tearful eyes,
In utter anguish and despair.

He knew Death's Angel soon would come—
He glanced far back on his past life,
But nothing save a ruined soul,
Could he retrace—but sin and strife.
His youth returned to him tonight
As spectres—and recalled the days

His father guided him aright,
And bade him shun sin's evil ways.

His conscience smote him sorely now,
He found his promises unkept;
Unconsciously, in bitter grief
He looked towards Heaven, and wildly wept—
"Oh! Father, give me back my youth,
Place me once more upon the way
That leads to Virtue's sunny paths,
That I may change to better day."

But, 'twas too late, his youth was gone,
It could not come to him again;
And his dear father, too, was dead,
No more could he advise him then.
* * * *

He watched the will-o'-wisp that danced
Upon the marsh in mystic ways,
Then vanished in the churchyard near:
He cried—"There are my foolish days!"
A star came shooting down from Heaven,
And glittering, fell, and disappeared.
"That am I," said his aching heart,
Remorse then pained him, and he feared.

His glowing mind displayed to him
Night phantoms wandering far about,
The windmill raised its threatening arms
As if to crush him, without doubt.
And in the empty charnel-house
Was seen a mask, whose very form
Assumed his own, by slow degrees—
His heart was filled with terror's storm.

Now, in the midst of this sore strife,
Came floating liquid notes around,

Of New Year's music, soft and sweet,
As the hushed Vesper's holy sound.
While note to note fell on his ear,
Far from the church-tower, solemn, slow,
His mind grew calmer, more at ease,
And he felt strengthened in his woe.

He looked out o'er the wide, wide world,
And out upon the blue horizon,
He thought of dear friends of his youth,
All happy with a brighter vision!
Some teachers of all earthly things,
Some fathers with good children blest;
They were all glad this New Year's Eve,
He only sad, in mind distressed.

With heavy sighs, and many tears,
He cried, "Oh! I, too, might have been
So blest and happy, and might sleep,
Like you, my friends, in peace serene."
"Oh! parents, dear, I might have been,
This New Year's Eve, so very glad,
Had I but lived as you had wished,
And had obeyed you—now I'm sad."

He viewed, again, the charnel-house—
The mask, with features like his own;
Rose up, and by his thoughts of ghosts,
Was changed to living youth, full grown!
He closed his eyes, he could not look,
A thousand hot tears fell like rain,
He softly sighed, senseless and sad—
"Come back, youth, oh! come back again!"

And it did come, as he so wished,
For in this lovely New Year's night
He had but *dreamed* so fearfully:

He was a youth yet, glad and bright.
But all his errors they were true,
That was no fancy-faring dream;
Yet he thanked God that he was young,
For time well-spent would better him.

Return with him, young reader, now,
If you stand on a devious way,
This dreadful dream your judge shall be
For future times, where'er you stay,
And should you then cry out aloud,
So full of woe—"Youth, come again!"
'Twill be too late: no youth, alas,
Will come to be lived over then.

LOVE'S ETERNITY

Silently, steadily, slowly,
Snowflakes are falling adown the sky,
Filling the Earth with their beauty and brightness,
Petals they are of rare, radiant whiteness,
Wafted from flowers that blossom on high.

Silently, steadily, sweetly,
Love finds its way to the human heart,
Filling the soul with such exquisite gladness,
That even sorrow is reft of its sadness,
By the sweet power that love doth impart.

Silently, steadily, surely,
Snowflakes will vanish and melt away,
Spring time advancing—but tho' they surrender,—
Love that is deep, that is true, that is tender,
Lives and endureth forever and aye.

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY

While Cupid his arrows and bow flung aside,
  Was sleeping one morn 'neath a tree,
It happened that Malice was passing close by,
And, seeing the weapons, he came up quite sly,
  And seizing them ran off in glee.

In horror and grief Cupid woke up to find
  His love-giving arrows all gone;
Bewailing and weeping, he hunted each place,
On swift-speeding wings he continued his chase,
  Each day from the earliest dawn.

But vain were his searches, alas! and he soon
  Began to grow pallid and pine,—
When one frosty morning in February, lo!
An old man approached with a sheath and a bow,
  Who proved to be St. Valentine.

Here, child, are thy weapons, I rescued at last,
  From Malice with all might and main;
The hearts of the people are passive and cold,
Go pierce with thine arrows the young and the old,
  That love's flame may kindle again.

Then Cupid grew happy and active once more,
  His shafts flew in numbers away.
Love greetings and tokens and pledges went round,
By ties deep and tender all hearts became bound,
  And this was St. Valentine's day.

A DREAM

(*From the German of Uhland*)

One night I had a dream—
  High on a rocky steep,
Close by the Ocean's edge I lay,
Where I could all the land survey,
  And far out o'er the deep.

A ship down by the sea
  Lay ready decked since dawn,
Its gaily colored flags waved high,
The boatman near the helm stood by
  Impatient to be gone.

From distant mountains came
  A merry band to view,
Like angels were they radiant fair,
Adorned with wreaths of flowers rare,
  And toward the Sea they drew.

Before them children ran
  In groups all glad and gay,
The band bore goblets which they swung,
And some made music, others sung
  The while in dance and play.

They to the boatman spake
  "Wilt thou convey us o'er;"
"Life's pleasures and life's joys we are,
We wish from Earth to part far, far
  From earth forevermore."

He took them in his ship
  Across the seas to sail,
And spake "Oh! joys, but tell me, pray,

Have none remained behind to stay
On mountain or in vale?"

They cried, "we are in haste,
Steer out, all, all are here,"
And so they sailed in light-fresh wind,
All Earth's delights and joys combined,
I saw them disappear.

AN EVENING PRAYER

Bend and hear me, O my Father,
As I offer up my prayer,
When the silent shadows gather
In the dewy evening air.

I beseech, Lord, thy protection,
Guard thou me from every sin,
Pardon all past imperfection,
Help me love and truth to win.

Though life's way be dark and dreary,
In thee will I put my trust;
Rest thou givest to the weary,—
Thou who art all-wise and just.

Let me feel thy presence ever,
As a power sweet and strong,
So that I may wander never
In the path of doubt and wrong.

Heavenly Father, bend and hear me,
Listen to my prayer to-night,
In my slumbers be thou near me,
Watch o'er me till morning light.

ODE TO THE MOON

Tell me wondrous moon, so hoary,
What is thy mysterious ball,
There suspended in white glory
'Gainst high Heaven's azure wall?

Changless art thou in thy changing,
Pale and silent guest of night;
Art thou through the broad sky ranging
Seeking some lost Satellite?

Art thou Clotho spinning ever
Mankind's fate in threads of gold,
As upon the rippling river
Thy long strands in rays unfold?

Mute thou gazeth—but thy power
E'en the mighty oceans know,
By thy influence through each hour
Their great tides both ebb and flow.

What deep sorrow art thou keeping,
That begetteth sorrow too?
For the night black-veiled is weeping
Sympathetic tears of dew.

And the little stars are grieving
At thy grave sad face and wan,
Troubled, trembling, thee perceiving,
Cannot close their eyes till dawn.

I, too, cease my mirth and laughter,
As I watch thee onward climb;
Life's great ends my soul yearns after,
Yearns to reach thy heights sublime.

FIREFLIES

O tiny, wingèd creatures,
  Ye golden motes of light,
That shining through the darkness
  Are seen, then lost to sight!

Are ye not fallen-stars, say,
  From yon fleece-clouded sky,
And groping 'mid night's shadows,
  To mount again on high?

Perhaps ye are the lanterns
  Aërial watchman bear,
Who guard the sleeping flowers
  All through the night with care.

O'er meadows, too, ye wander;
  And oft I see ye go
In merry parties, dancing,
  All lightly, on tiptoe.

Like scintillations flashing
  From some rare poet's mind,
Whose hidden fire burneth
  With thoughts for humankind.

Ye sparkle on and upwards,
  Where deepest shades prevail;
Like twinkling stars of night, gaze
  On mountain, heath, and vale.

O tiny, wingèd creatures,
  Ye golden motes of light,
That shining through the darkness
  Are seen, then lost to sight!

AUTUMN MEDITATION

Summer merges into Autumn,
  Earth's long travail now is o'er,
And into her lap there poureth
  All the harvest's richest store.

Fruits the orchards yield in plenty,
  Golden grains the meadows gild,
Heaven looks down with eyes the bluest.
  Nature's heart with joy is filled.

See the sumachs on Mount Royal,
  Birch and oak and maple trees!
Has the rainbow been unloosened
  From the skies and dropped o'er these.

For in brightest tints attired–
  Red and orange, yellow, green,
Blue and indigo and purple,
  Every bush and tree is seen.

Glorious is this brilliant season,
  Doomed too rapidly to fade;
Winds already sigh and murmur,
  Earth will soon be lowly laid.'

But in every dying Autumn
  There is a promise of a spring,
Buds appear on all the branches,
  Meanwhile trustful slumbering.

Safely treasured in its keeping,
  Each October holds its May,
Till the Winter snows are over,
  And have melted quite away.

TO——

Like sweet forget-me-nots
All moistened with the early morning dew,
Are her appealing eyes;
While tender, soulful thoughts
Within those mild, transparent depths of blue
For evermore arise.

Her nature best compares,
In its unsullied purity and grace,
With that white, fragrant flower
Whose name she aptly bears;
Oh, Lily! offspring of the May, I trace
In thee God's love and power.

SAINT AUGUSTINE AND THE BOY

(From the German of Vogl)

In Hippo by the Sea once stood
A humble little house of wood,
Where dwelt, in piety serene,
A holy man,—Saint Augustine.

From morn till evening he would sit
With documents and holy Writ,
Forever studying there to find
The God he loved with heart and mind.

He knows not, neither does he care,
If Spring with all its bloom is there,
Or whether o'er his cottage blow
The winter storms and winter snow.

His books and manuscripts alone
He seeks, and is intent upon;

Researching, studying, that he
May make here the discovery.

And, filled with but this one thought still,
He wanders out one night at will.
Alas! nor sea nor land him lures:
His mind but one idea endures.

While musing in the twilight dim,
He sees a boy approaching him;
And, looking up, this smiling child
Seemed more an angel pure and mild.

A shell he holds within his hand;
And by the sea, down in the sand,
He stoops, to make a little pit,
That water may run into it.

Saint Augustine gazed in surprise.
What does the little boy devise?
And, moving toward him, he said,
"Pray tell me, child, what thou hast made?"

The boy looked up quite fearlessly.
"O great, good man, dost thou not see?
I wish to let the ocean roll
Right here, into this little hole."

"How canst thou fancy aught so wild?"
Replied the Saint. "Thou foolish child,
To think that the entire sea
In this small hole could emptied be."

"Why should this not be possible?"
The boy then asked with earnest will:
"Canst thou reveal and fathom, thou,
What ne'er was given man to know?

" Much sooner will the entire sea
Roll into this small cavity
Than man by searching find out e'er
The God who ruleth everywhere.

" He can but pray on bended knee
To Him, and own his poverty."
So spake the boy in accents clear,
Then vanished in the atmosphere.

Saint Augustine stood by the shore.
A look of utter shame he wore,
For deep within his heart he knew
That what the boy had said was true.

And, when he reached his home again,
He sought no longer books; for vain—
Yes vain and empty—seemed all lore.
The little child had taught him more.

In larger faith and peace serene
Hereafter lived Saint Augustine;
And in the sun, the flower, the sod
He now saw *everywhere* his God.

TO A CROW

Welcome art thou hither,
Glossy, sable bird,
Come from regions thither,
Bringing gladsome word,—
That man's bright hopes of Spring no longer are deferred.

First art thou that darest
In this stormy clime,
With the news thou bearest

Of the budding prime,
When frost and cold and snow shall vanish for a time.

With what rapture filling
Every soul anew,
Hear we thy note thrilling
Wood and meadow through,
Eve violets 'neath the ground have oped their eyes of blue.

Like a trumpet warning
Sleepers to arise,
Thy deep voice at morning
In loud accents cries,
"Awake, creation, wake and lift ye to the skies!"

Bird of shadowy plumage,
Dark and dismal thou;
Yet thy gloomy image,
Sombre, sullen crow,
Foretells the brightest season earth can ever show.

THE LEGEND OF THE ROSE

When Flora, goddess of the flowers,
Came down into this world of ours,
With all her children fair;
Out of her basket she let fall
To Earth these blossoms, one and all,
And left them lying there.

Then each young flower sought at will,
In vale and wood, o'er field and hill,
Some sheltering retreat.
The violet found a shady nook,
Close by a pebbly, babbling brook,
And bloomed there still and sweet,

The daisy and the lily hied
Off to the meadow, where they spied
  Bright, sunny spots to grow;
On tall and slender stems they hung;
Caressed by gentle winds that swung
  Them softly to and fro.

Meanwhile, the rose had wandered on,
Unmindful where her mates had gone,
  Till near a grassy bed
She saw a bush with thorns beset,
Its tender leaves all dripping wet
  With tears of pain it shed.

'Here on this shrub will I abide,'
The rose compassionately cried,
  'And daily strive to give
Some brightness, comfort and good cheer
To this afflicted thorn-bush here,
  As long as I shall live.'

Then from the ground on high she rose,
This crimson flower of love here chose
  Her humble lot to cast.
Bravely she climbed the bush, along,
Though pricked by spiky spines and strong,
  And reached the top at last.

And evermore above all blooms,
Of lovely hues and sweet perfumes,
  Tho rose in beauty towers.
Upon her rough and thorny throne,
She still is recognized and known
  As queen among the flowers.

THE FIRST SNOW

(*From the German of Moritz Hartmann*)

The trees so lately green and fair
  Stand covered now with snow;
Youth's dreams that once so blissful were
  Are dimmed with love's first woe.

But snowflakes melt and vanish fast
  When sunbeams shine thereon,
While youth's first grief but grows more vast
  When love's first love is gone.

A SINGER

In Stockholm, years ago, there lived,
  Of life's sweet comforts quite deprived,
Within an almshouse lone and cold,
  A little girl scarce six years old.

A working-woman, rough and rude,
  As guardian to the orphan stood;
Each morn she went to earn her bread,
  At home she safely locked the maid.

So little Johanne ne'er could rove
  Through fields and woods as children love,
Nor breathe the sunny morning air,
  'Mid trees, and birds, and flowers fair.

In household tasks each day was spent,
  While left in this imprisonment;
And clasping her starved kitten, she
  Would often weep most bitterly.

One noon, disheartened and forlorn,
  She fell asleep quite weary worn;

And woke at setting of the sun,
To find her work was far from done.

In haste about her tasks she rose,
Dreading the woman's threats and blows;
And as she toiled, began to sing,
In plaintive, silvr'y carolling.

A royal lady passing near,
Paused suddenly those tones to hear;
Unearthly sweet rang out the voice,
It made her very heart rejoice.

Unconscious of a listener,
The child sang on more rich and clear;
Till at the door a knock was heard,
Which hushed the golden-throated bird.

The Countess rapped, but all in vain,
Admission there she could not gain;
But some kind neighbor told to her
The fate of the small prisoner.

Some weeks went by, till one bright day
The lady came again that way;
And asked if she might give her aid
To educate the little maid.

The guardian giving her consent,
The child then with the countess went;
And entrance to a school obtained,
In which her wondrous voice was trained.

Her talent grew, till hill and dale
Proclaimed the Swedish Nightingale,
And as the unrivalled queen of tone,
Is Jenny Lind now world-wide known.

HOLLYHOCKS

'Mid drowsy sunflowers tall,
That rear their heads above the garden wall,
The stately hollyhocks stand,
With crimson flowers close along each stem,
That glisten like the ruddiest ruby gem,
Set in an emerald wand.

Upon their native ground,
Like troops of well-drilled soldiers are they found,
Nature's own body-guard;
And, clad in their bright scarlet coats-of-mail,
They for a time continue to prevail,
Unbroken and unscarred.

Till swiftly on the spot,
Comes August, a commander fierce and hot,
Leading his army forth.
Tossing their yellow plumes high in the air,
A valiant host of golden-rods appear,
And prove superior worth.

O hollyhocks that grow
So far above your sister flowers below,
Ye seem, while there ye stand,
The spires of God's cathedral, vast and free,
That point forever upward hopefully
Unto the better land.

The moist-eyed buttercup,
Low at your feet, admiringly looks up,
With sense of awe profound,
While ye perform your mission pure and meek,
And with your golden tongues a language speak,
More eloquent than sound.

EASTER HOPES

Not without some token has God left us
  Of a future state of peace and bliss,
For the souls of whom He hath bereft us
  On this earthly Paradise of His.

See the caterpillar slowly creeping,
  Living out his little span below,
Till in his cocoon he crouches sleeping,
  There a wondrous change to undergo.

Laid awhile entombed in Death's protection,
  Soon into the sunlight, air and sky
He ascends—a glorious resurrection,
  Now a golden-wingéd butterfly.

Surely, if the meanest worm that crawleth,
  God hath raised into a better sphere,
Man—His noblest work—He no less calleth
  To a higher life when leaving here.

Shall it be, as Art so oft hath painted,
  That the change this new existence brings,
Makes us angels—radiant and sainted
  In white garments and with shining wings?

    Ah! we know not all God holds in keeping
      For His children in that better land,
    When at length we wake from our long sleeping
      We shall then rejoice and understand.

Mourn not, man, but trust with resignation,
  When thy loved ones part from thee and die,
For alone by such a transformation
  Can they live in Immortality.

AN AUTUMN WIND

Over broad fields of ripe barley and corn,
Swift, on tiptoe,
Hurried a wind very early one morn,
Cheeks all aglow,
Just as the Autumn had kissed her farewell,
Leaving the earth that she loved, ah! so well.

Onward she sped, like Diana in chase,
Blowing her horn,
Never once resting or slackening her pace
Till she was borne
Close to the maple and great linden trees,
And here she tarried,—this wild Autumn breeze.

Then all the linden leaves trembled with dread,
Turning quite pale,
While listening maple leaves colored deep red,
Fearing this gale,
Quivered and murmured, not knowing this wind
Came for a purpose most loving and kind.

Each little leaf from the trees she brought down
Safe to earth's fold,
Changing their dresses for ones of dark brown,
'Gainst frost and cold.
Then all the leaves curled themselves in a heap,
Lulled by the wind to a long Winter's sleep.

TO A HOUSED HYACINTH

Welcome, hyacinth of spring,
Here in winter blossoming,
Spite of frost and cold;
Sweetening with thy rich perfume
All the air about my room,

Cheering with thy colored bloom,
All who thee behold.

Through these months with eager eyes,
Have I watched to see thee rise
From thy cradle brown;
Now at length I gaze on thee,
Tall and slender, fair and free,
Grown to full maturity.
In thy purple gown.

In the hollow of a hand,
Gentle flower, thou seem'st to stand,
As thy buds unfold;
Outstretched, tapering fingers bear
High thy clustered stalk in air,
Like a sceptre jewelled rare,
Some proud queen might hold.

Blossoms, happy is your lot,
Pain and sorrow know ye not,
Sheltered here with care;
Ye ne'er saw 'neath starlit skies,
Night's dew-tears stream from her eyes,
Never heard the wind's wild cries,
Shrieking her despair.

Guileless little tinted flower,
Thou art gifted with a power,
That thou dream'st not of;
Here with both thy sisters bright,
One in pink clad, one in white,
Ye as Graces three incite,
Faith, and Hope, and Love.

COMPENSATIONS

If it were not for the darkness
That enshrouds the world at night,
We should never know the beauty
Of the stars' soft, radiant light.
But these eyes of heaven open
When the shadows first appear,
And their lustre only deepens
As the blackness grows more drear.

If it were not for the crosses
That we daily have to bear,
In the trials and afflictions
That each human life must share,
We should never know the blessing
Of that holy inward calm,
Born of every earthly suffering,
Bringing with it healing balm.

Darkest clouds have silver linings;
Rainbows span the storm-girt sky,
Giving promise through the rainfall
Of full sunshine by and by.
Pain and anguish borne in patience
Sweetest compensations hide,
And with every crucifixion
Comes a joyful Easter tide.

EVENING HYMN

Guard me throughout the silent night,
When none but thou can see;
For, Lord the darkness and the light,
Are both alike to thee.

When, by thy providential power,
Mine eyelids close in sleep,

Abide with me through every hour,
  Thy vigil o'er me keep.

And if to-day, by word or deed,
  My soul has gone astray,
Oh, pardon, Lord, the sin, and lead
  Me in a better way.

Guard me throughout each silent night,
  O Father, till that morn,
When to thy heaven of love and light
  My spirit shall be borne.

EMIGRAVIT

In the pride of summer's glory,
  When the flowers were bright and gay,
And the little birds sang sweetly
  In the trees the livelong day,
Death's swift angel came and bore her
  From our midst away.

Earth could ill afford to lose her,
  Lose a soul so pure and fair;
But it is a gain for heaven,
  Where she liveth blest fore'er.
And the stars are shining brighter,
  Now that she is there.

Yonder in its bloom and beauty
  Stands the stately golden-rod,
Seems to whisper, pointing upward
  From the dark and grassy sod,
"She is free from care and anguish,
  In the peace of God."

Should we wish her here among us,
In this world of strife and pain,
When within her Father's mansion
She may happily remain?
No: for though we mourn, we will not
Call her back again.

"Hush, be still!" a voice proclaimeth
In mild accents from the skies,—
"*Still, and know that God thy God is.*"
Can then harm to man arise?
Come, O Faith, be our Consoler,
Dry all sorrowing eyes.

TO A BUTTERFLY

Blithesome and light-hearted,
Pretty little thing,
Soon as morn has started,
Thou art on the wing,
Through the air and sunshine gaily fluttering.

Insect proud and dreamy,
With the winds at play,
Like a blossom creamy,
Driftest thou away,
On thy petalled wings, thro' all the livelong day.

Kissing lonely flowers,
Where in nooks unsought,
They through weary hours
Deemed themselves forgot;
Timid violet and blue forget-me-not.

Then with one another
Oft I see ye race,

Sisters with their brother,
In a merry chase,
Over fields of clover and thro' boundless space.

From the tomblike prison,
Where thou long didst lie,
Joyful art thou risen,
Thy new wings to try.
Conscious Nature smiling at thy ecstacy.

And I muse and wonder
As thou floatest by—
When death lays me under
The dark turf, shall I
Wake at length to light like thee, oh butterfly?

THE HEART

(Translated from the German of Neumann)

Two chambers hath the heart,
Where dwell
Both joy and pain apart.

When joy wakes in the one,
Then sleeps
Pain calmly in his own.

Oh, joy! thyself restrain,
Speak softly—
Lest thou awaken pain.

THE END OF DAY

Far down the west the sun lies dead,
  Upon a bed of roses;
Upon his breast, his regal head,
  In stillness now reposes,
While drawing near with softest tread.
  The night his eyelids closes.

The bright, glad day is dead, ah, me,
  The widowed night sits wailing,
Her sweet, pale face one scarce can see
  Behind her sable veiling,
And stars in heaven's infinity
  Are burning low and paling.

A SONG OF HEAVEN

Beyond the boundless blue on high,
Far, far above the star-lit sky,
  Methought that heaven lay.
Yet, gazing in thy soulful eyes,
I seem to look on Paradise,
  So chaste, so fair are they.

With perfect bliss, methought, God's love
Would only in that land above
  The human soul endow.
Yet in thy presence dear, divine,
Such holy joy and peace are mine,
  I feel heaven here and now.

CHRISTMAS EVE

It is Christmas eve, it is Christmas eve;
The children are all fast asleep, I believe;
For Santa Claus soon is to come, that I know,
To fill all the stockings from top down to toe.
He waits till the moon is out shining quite bright
To find his way down through the chimney by night
He leaves his small reindeer and sled on the street,
And takes all his gifts from the high piled up seat.
Then into the nursery he quietly goes,
First peeps at the children in silent repose,
He sees all the stockings hung up in the nook
And fills each with sugarplums, toys and a book.
Then back to his sled he runs, freed of his load,
And drives out of sight, far up over the road,
He wishes us all ere he'll soon disappear,
"A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year."

SONNET—WINTER

Alas! sad Nature sits aside to mourn,
For Earth lies at her feet quite cold and dead,
The Autumn blushes from her cheek are fled,
Her gold and crimson garments from her torn,
And there she lies of all her beauty shorn.
Now tenderly by hoary Winter led,
A troup of starry snowflakes gently spread
A winding sheet about her, to be worn

Until the morning when a robin's song
Will rouse her. Earth will rise and live again
In budding sweetness of a new-born Spring,
In all the fair unfoldings that belong
To that glad time of hope and promise when
The joy of life suffuseth everything.

A SUNSHOWER

Sun and rain have gone to war:
  Which of them will win?
Clouds are gathering near and far,
  No more light streams in!
Is the sun already slain
By the cannon-balls of rain,
  Shot through thick and thin?

Ah, no! for the sun, aglow,
  Shines out from on high,
Bends his mighty, colored bow,
  And the arrows fly.
Full ten thousand sunbeams dart,
Pierce each raincloud to the heart,
  Till they vanquished lie.

FIELD DAISIES

'Tis June, the fields are argus-eyed
  With daisies, fresh and bright,
And thousands of these eyes look up,
With here and there a buttercup,
  That seeks the air and light.

The daisies are in bloom again,
  Glad children of the lea,
Whose faces innocent and sweet,
Turn wonderingly the sun to greet
  In joyful ecstacy.

They speak to us, these dear, dumb flowers,
  As beauty ever must,
And in the memory still remain,
Long after they are withered lain,
  And crumbled into dust.

These simple, artless daisies crowd
The meadow with their bloom,
Their color is not dazzling fair,
Their form and texture neither rare,
Nor yield they rich perfume.

Yet they possess above all flowers
A special sanctity,
And in the golden crowns they wear,
And all the snow-white wings they bear,
Angelic forms I see.

THE ROBBER ZAUN

In the Hartz Mountain forest, once, long, long ago,
Dwelt a highwayman, wicked and bold.
He was known by the people as old robber Zaun,
And was fearful and fierce to behold.
He would haunt the dark forest by day and by night
To entrap all that came in his way;
And alas! for the traveller who chanced to be seen,
For on him he was certain to prey.
Well, a weaver named Niemann, who lived in the town,
Sent his daughter one morning in June
To the village to pay to the landlord the rent;
And he bade her be back before noon.
Twenty thalers he placed in a basket for her,
Which he hung quite secure on her arm.
He directed the path by the forest to her,
And the house standing next Heinz's farm.
So this blithe little maiden of scarcely nine years
Bade good-by, and was soon down the road,
When, on reaching the woodpath, a man, tall and dark,
On a sudden before the child stood.
"Oh, good-day, little maiden! where goest thou, girl?
And pray tell what thy basket may hold?"
Looking up frank and smiling, the innocent child

All the errand the wild stranger told.
"I will carry your basket and go with you there."
So she handed it over to him.
For a moment he halted, then gazed at the child,
And his eyes became moistened and dim.
Then they walked on together, she prattling away
As she tripped gaily on by his side,
Till at length they arrived at the landlord's domain,
Where the child pushed the gate open wide.
"I will leave you now, maiden," the man said: "adieu!
Take your basket unopened, my dear,
And inform your good father, when home you return,
That the great robber, Zaun, brought you here."
"For a child's simple innocence, artless and pure,
Was its own best protection and shield;
And, although I was tempted her money to steal,
'Twas impossible this time to yield."

EVERLASTINGS

A garden of gay summer-flowers among,
These simple dry blossoms I chose,
And left the pure lily with bright golden tongue
Unplucked there beside the pink rose;
For what would their fragrance and beauty avail
It they, when they reach thee, are faded and pale?

But these little flowers I culled from their bed,
Dear emblems that live and remain
Unchanged and unblemished when others are dead,
And long since all withered have lain.
These fadeless, crisp blossoms I beg you will take—
My love *everlasting*—for Love's own sweet sake.

SONNET—DEATH

Oh! might we but for one brief moment raise
The veil that hides our loved ones from our sight,
When with relentless and resistless might
The Angel Death his seal upon them lays.
Could we feel sure that we again shall gaze
On those we love, perchance in realms of light.
We might endure the loss, and put to flight
The anguish and despair that fill our days.
But in a vague uncertainty we cry
To Heaven—with lonely, aching hearts, and lo!
No answer cometh—no one hears. Too deep
And vast the gulf that bridges earth and sky;
And this one solace mitigates our woe,
That Death will, one day fold us too, to sleep.

SPRING AND DEATH

Under the ice and the snow on the ground,
Spring lies there hidden from sight and from sound;
Neither the piteous wails of the wind,
Seeking the rest that he never can find,
Seem to arouse her or summon her forth.
Meanwhile the Winter—great bird of the north—
Shelters and guards her with mother-like care,
Spreading his snowy white wings over her.
Nor will he hence till the mandate be given,
"Rise, rise up, O Spring, draw earth nigh unto heaven!"

Think not, O man, that thy loved ones are dead,
When in the cold and damp ground they are laid.
Though thou art parted from them for a while,
Yet they *live*, hallowed and blest with God's smile.
Shielded, protected, they dwell evermore
Happier than ever they could be before.

Were there no heaven, there could be no love.
Trust, then, thy dear ones are resting above.
And, as the Spring greets the Earth year by year,
So will man meet those he sought and loved here.

PARSIFAL

I dreamed that I was roused from sleep
  One early Sabbath morn,
By strains of wondrous melody,
  That to mine ears were borne.

And ever grander, deeper, swelled
  The notes above, around,
My senses grew o'erpowered with
  The surging sea of sound.

Now, as I stooped to hearken whence
  This music rich and rare,
I felt myself transported high,
  Into the outer air.

Here bells were tolling solemnly,
  And choristers sang low,
While marching to the stately chords
  That issued, sacred, slow.

Intense the yearning and sublime,
  As louder rose the tones,
My soul was ravished as I moved
  Far off to higher zones.

And as I floated up and on
  In this enraptured state,
The harmonies swept full and free,
  I stood at heaven's gate.

It was the angelic host I heard,
In chorus one and all,
And the music they were chanting was
From Wagner's " Parsifal."

SUMMER TWILIGHT

Dim shadows steal, with noiseless tread,
In swift succession by,
As twilight, with her wings outspread,
Hovers 'twixt earth and sky.

The stately lily hangs her head
In dewy, sweet repose;
The pansy, curled up in her bed,
Slumbers beside the rose.

The birds have sought their downy nest,
Secure on tree-tops high,
While winds are rocking them to rest,
Chanting a lullaby.

Above, two stars peep shyly out
To view the young moon rise,
That, like a fairy, golden boat,
Anchored in heaven lies.

And in this still and solemn hour
All strife and tumult cease;
For over earth, with mystic power,
Broodeth a hallowed peace.

CUPID'S GARDEN

Every spring in Cupid's garden,
Bushes may be seen
Bearing strings of flowers coral,
Bleeding hearts they are, tho' floral,
Hanging 'twixt the green.

Cupid's arrows sharp and deadly,
Caused this dire woe,
Each young heart now doomed to wither,
Has been pierced and then brought hither,
Bleeding, trembling so.

Now he waters them, repentant,
'Tends them all in vain;
Hearts that Cupid once has riven,
He can never more enliven
Or restore again.

SOLITUDE

One little bird on tree-top high
Sings out his plaintive lay,
One single star out on the sky
Keeps watch till break of day.

The last sweet rose that summer shed
Must quite forsaken feel;
For down her cheeks, all flushed and red,
Great dewy teardrops steal.

And I amid the silence here
Stand at my garden gate.
Alas, how long the hours appear
To those who watch and wait!

But morning breaks. The bird hath flown.
To join its mate afar;
And back unto its sisters gone
That single evening star.

To kindred flowers a kindly wind
The rose's bloom has blown;
While I, alas! remain behind,
To tread my path *alone*

THE LEGEND OF THE MOON

When the crescent moon first moored his boat in the sky,
Ages and ages ago,
He saw in the distance the fair evening star,
And fell quite in love with her there from afar,
So bright with her shimmering glow.

Now each night as he waxed in both stature and strength,
Ardor and hope filled his breast;
With eyes full of yearning and languishing love,
He gazed at her steadfastly high up above,
As slowly he moved towards the west.

But, alas, unrequited his passion remained;
Venus ignored him outright;—
With cold, heartless glances his love she returned,
And he, hapless moon, when the truth he had learned,
Soon waned, and then vanished from sight.

Each successive young moon proved inconstant since then,
Changeful, has come and has gone,
Increasing until his full roundness was gained,—
Then steadily, gradually, silently waned,
The Evening Star still shining on.

NOTHING WITHOUT LOVE

(Translated from the German of Vogl)

Little sprightly bird, and free,
Happy in swift flight forever,
Singing gayly on each tree,
But—
Without love, never, never.!

Nodding flowers, as they grow,
Whisper in the morning glimmer,
Life, how beautiful art thou!
But—
Without love, never, never!

Billows word for word exchange,
Flashing in bright rays of silver,
Two by two, they gladly range,
But—
Without love, never, never!

Thou heart filled with joy and pain
Feelest, too, this one truth ever,
Blest wilt thou alone remain,
But—
Without love, never, never!

IT IS JULY

In coats of red the hollyhocks,
Drill 'neath a cloudless sky,
Their heads erect upon their stalks,
While near them bloom larkspur and phlox,
It is July.

The robin in the apple-tree
Entreats her young to fly,
To stretch their tiny wings and see
The world about them full and free,
It is July.

Out in the field the farmer reaps
His hay and piles it high—
The cricket in the tall grass sleeps,
A cooing wind about him creeps,
It is July.

And Nature, meanwhile, labors on,
Her work to fructify,
Green fruits enlarge until full grown,
By sun and rain that shower down,
It is July.

Oh! when at length my star shall set,
It would be sweet to lie,
With daisies bright and mignonette,
Above my still cold form while yet,
It is July.

THE EASTER GOSPEL

It is not in a world beyond our own
Man life eternal wins;
Nor need he cross Death's silent bridge of stone
Before that life begins.

Eternity is first with man below,
E'en from his very birth;
A heaven hereafter can he only know
By making one of earth.

Christ rose by triumph over sin and wrong
When in the desert tried,
Not that third day when vainly sought the throng
His body crucified.

So when all evil dies, and base desire,
Our souls are sanctified,
Upraised, and purged by God's consuming fire;
And this is Easter-tide.

While for the rest, O man, thy faith still keep,
And know death ends not all:
The Lord our shepherd is, and we his sheep,
Who humbly wait his call.

We wander here awhile and widely roam,
Set down on Earth's domain;
But God will bear us, when night's shadows come,
Safe to his fold again.

SONG

(*From the German of Eichendorf*)

How oft a merry strain I sing,
And joyous seem, and smile,
When bitter tears in secret wring
My aching heart the while.

And thus the cagèd nightingale,
When balmy Spring allures,
Pours out in sweetest notes her wail—
The longing she endures.

Man hears with joy the melting strain,
His heart grows glad and strong,
Yet no one feels the hidden pain,
The anguish in the song.

THE CHRISTMAS STAR

The story of the Christ-child's birth
  Near Advent time I told
To fair-haired little Kathleen,
  A girl of four years old.

On Christmas eve she gazed far out
  Upon the star-lit sky;
She saw fair Venus overhead,
  And uttered with a cry.

'Oh! mother, that must be the star
  Which long ago that morn
The shepherds followed till they found
  The place where Christ was born.'

'Oh, do you think if we would go
  Where that star leads the way,
We too might find a little Christ
  To worship and obey!'

Ah, little dream'd sweet Kathleen,
  That on her own dear head,
The wondrous planet all its light
  In full, deep lustre shed.

LAURA

Laura, winsome little maiden,
  Lassie sweet and shy:—
By the brook I see you dreaming,
Lost in fancy—never deeming
  An intruder nigh.

Cheeks where roses cease not blooming
  All the seasons through;

With your locks of golden yellow,
And your dark-brown eyes so mellow.—
Who so fair as you?

In your shawl and pink sunbonnet,
Oft I see you roam,
Through the fields all white with clover,
Driving, when the day is over,
Kine and cattle home.

Guileless little country maiden,
Stately is your mien,
Though in rustic dress you wander,
With your beauty you are grander
Than the proudest queen.

Laura, simple, artless maiden,—
Lassie I adore.
To my heart oh, let me take you,
Love and serve you till I make you
Mine forevermore.

CHRISTMAS ECHOES

Today as welcome as of yore,
The Christmas-tide comes round;
While peace, good-will and happiness
In heart and home abound.

Anew we celebrate the morn,
That marks the Christ child's birth,
And join the glad hosannas that
Resound throughout the earth.

The whole wide world seems clasping hands,
In one inclusive ring.

Adoring and acknowledging,
This little babe—their King.

O beautiful and blessed time,
When self is all forgot,
When love and helpfulness alone,
Engross our human thought.

When His dear spirit one and all
Seem joyfully to share,
We took into our neighbor's face
And see the Christ child there.

Then ring, O bells, rejoice, rejoice,
The Christmas tide has come,
And peace, good-will and happiness
Abound in heart and home.

SNOWFLAKES AND SNOWDROPS

A shower of snowflakes came hurrying one day
Adown from an April sky;
But only a moment on earth could they stay,
Alas! for the sun on high
Shot out glances so fierce on these flakes where they lay
That they trembled, and, melting in tears, slipped away.

A week glided by, when a wondrous sight
Was given one morning to greet.
The ground lately bare was now covered all white
With blossoms most dainty and sweet,
For the flakes that in tear-drops had vanished from sight
By the penitent sun were made snowdrops so bright.

SONG

Thy heart is like a gentle stream,
On which my little bark I steer,
And wander in a happy dream,
Along its waters fresh and clear.

I care not whither tends my boat,
So that I never reach the shore,
I only long to drift and float
Upon this stream forevermore.

DISTURB IT NOT

(*Translated from the German of Geibel*)

Where'er a heart with love o'erflows,
Disturb it not, but let it be:
The spark divine should not be quenched.
In sooth, it were not well with thee.

If e'er upon the wide earth's round
An unpolluted spot be found,
It is a young fresh, ardent heart
In love's first raptures deeply bound.

Oh, grant to it the sweet spring-dream
That blooms with rosy flowers bright:
Thou know'st not what a Paradise
Is lost, when this dream takes its flight.

For many a stout heart has been broken
When love was rudely torn away;
And long endurance oft has turned
To hatred and despair for aye.

And many a lonely, aching soul
In direst need has loudly cried,
And thrown him down into the dust,—
The lovely god in him had died.

In vain, then, dost thou weep and grieve;
For no repentance on thy part
Can make a withered rose revive
Or reawake a deadened heart.

THE SPANISH BEGGAR-BOY

Upon the Puerta del Sol
In old Madrid one day,
A little beggar selling pins,
Pursued me on my way.

His wistful, upturned face bespoke
A life of care and pain,
Those dark, imploring eyes forsooth
Could never plead in vain.

"Oh: Senorita," he beseeched,
"Oh: cinco centimos,—
Do buy this box of pins from me
I am so poor God knows."

In Spanish accents thus he begged,
How plaintive were his tones,—
"Oh: Senorita-ita-hear"—
His very words were moans.

And I who am not wont to give
To beggars on the street—
Could not refrain when this small waif
My aid came to entreat.

Into his hand I slipped a coin,
And ne'er shall I forget,
The " Senorita gracias "—
With which my alms he met.

And still across the ocean far,
The vision comes again,—
In every waif I seem to see
That beggar-boy of Spain.

TO THE DYING YEAR

Farewell, Old Year, farewell!
Thy last brief hour
Peals from the mellow bell
In yon church tower.

Ere the first blush of morn
Tinges the east
Will a new year be born,
And thou released.

Gladly, O Year of Pain,
I see thee go.
I would not drink again
Thy cup of woe.

And yet thou hast not been
Wholly unkind:
Days bright and joyous e'en
Flash on my mind,—

When Eearth lay sweet and mild
In thy caress,
And Heaven itself had smiled,
And stooped to bless.

Thus, if the coming year
  Should saddened be,
Thoughts of thine hours of cheer
  Will comfort me.

Solemnly, one by one,
  Ceases each bell.
Old Year, thy course is run!
  Old Year, farewell!

MIGRATION

Gay summer birds appear in crowds
  Beneath an autumn sky,
While shrieking winds and lowering clouds
  Warn them 'tis time to fly.

With eager joy they spread their wings
  To take their southern flight.
There's One will guide their wanderings
  To sunny lands, and bright.

O happy birds, forever free
  From sorrow, toil, and care,
How full of sweetness life must be,
  How beautiful and fair!

No winter storms about you blow,
  No want is yours, nor pain.
Secure, to genial climes ye go
  Till Spring returns again.

When life's dark wintry days draw near,
  Oh, singing birds, like you
To some blest lands of joy and cheer
  I fain would migrate too.

AND IT WAS NIGHT

I travelled far o'er mountains high,
A rough and thorny way,
Until I came into a land
Where it was endless day.

Perpetual sunshine blotted out,
All clouds and mist and gloom,
No darkness hushed the songs of birds,
Nor closed the flowers bloom.

The brightness thrilled the world with joy
And vanished doubts and fears;
No sorrows dimmed the lives of men
No aching hearts—no tears.

A heavenly radiance suffused,
Each earthly form with light,
Ah! vision all too glorious;
I woke—and it was night.

CUPID'S THEFT

My heart was once a garden fair,
With roses bright, of rare perfume;
But Cupid came quite unaware
One day, and stole each lovely bloom

And now a dreary waste it lies—
Ah, foolish me, thus to forget
To guard its gates—had I been wise,
My garden might be flowering yet.

AND IT WAS DAY

From out my own dear native land
So sunny, fair and bright,
I once was to a country borne,
Where it was endless Night.

Dense blackness brooded over all,
Without one gleam of light,—
The very stars in Heaven above,
Were blotted out of sight.

And I was groping in the dark,
Bent down beneath a load,
Which I was forced to carry thro'
A labyrinthine road.

Oh: dreary 'twas and lonely too,
With nothing left to cheer,
All hearts were sad, the hours dragged on
Each moment seemed a year.

The cries of little children filled,
The cold and dismal air,—
While women wailed and wrung their hands
In anguish and despair.

Hither and yon they blindly moved,
As they in tumult groaned,—
And I had stretched out feeble hands
To one who fell and moaned.

When lo: a flood of sunshine streamed
Upon me where I lay,—
The birds were singing, skies were blue,
I woke—and it was Day.

PREMONITIONS

Two yellow leaves on the green linden tree
Lifeless and withered as withered can be.
Here in the midst of the summer's bright bloom,
Warning the earth of its forthcoming doom,
When all the verdure and flowers so gay,
Will have quite vanished and faded away.

Two silver hairs on a sunny young head,
Thro' heavy masses of golden locks spread,
Now in the blush and the fulness of youth,
Foretelling issues that age brings forsooth,
When life's sweet springtime will pass out of sight,
Leaving cold Winter and Silence and Night.

NOCTURNE

Like a joy that has stayed a brief moment, and fled
Like a rose that has bloomed for a while then lies dead,
So opens and closes the day;
While the sun in the west like a warrior bold,
Dons his cap and his mantle of crimson and gold
And rides down the heavens away.

With her sable wings lifted the night hovers near,
And enfolds in deep darkness the vast atmosphere,
The Earth rests in silence and dreams;
Up on high all the stars light their lanterns again
And are hanging them out in the sky to remain,
Till morn wakes the world with her beams.

Can it be that the moon has some sorrow to bear
That she secretly keeps and with Earth cannot share,
Else why with a tear stained face,
Does she gaze down forever in pity below
With a look of such quiet submission and woe,
As softly she circles through space?

TO A ROSE

A long-stemmed crimson rose has shed such sweetness
About me all these days,—
And stands as if regretful of life's fleetness
Within its crystal vase.

Its clustered petals still with fragrance laden,
Fall silent to the ground,
Like tears adown the cheek of some meek maiden
In tender sorrow bound.

And now its golden heart alone remaineth
Death seeming to defy,—
Assurance sweet despite all else that waneth
Of Love that cannot die.

TO THE SPRING

(*From the German of Schiller*)

Welcome charming, charming Springtime,
Nature's joy and her delight,
With thy flower-laden basket,
Making earth so glad and bright.

Yes: once more thou art among us,
Ah: so beautiful and sweet,—
Every heart is thrilled with pleasure,
Thy fair face again to greet.

Dost remember too my maiden?
Spring oh her remember thou:
Yonder lives the maid who loved me,—
Yea: the maid who loves me now.

For this maiden many a flower,
Oft have I besought of thee,

And again I come to beg them,—
Thou Spring, thou wilt give them me:

Welcome charming, charming Springtime,
Nature's joy and her delight,
With thy flower-laden basket,
Making earth so glad and bright.

RECONCILIATION

How sweet the moment when two hearts
That for a while seemed cold,
And lived apart indifferently
While suffering grief untold,—
Unite again in Love's embrace,
More tender than of old.

A sacred peace and joy is theirs
That they alone can know,
And happy tears too long withheld
In silent torrents flow,
While nearer, dearer, closer still,
Heart unto heart doth grow.

As when the currents of a stream
That stretch out toward the shore,
Are interrupted in their course
By some rude craft and oar,—
Their waters afterwards enfold
More closely than before.

Or sunbeams that no longer may
Their warmth with flowers share,
For some dark shower clouds their path,
But after that 'tis fair—
The sky sends down its brightest lights.
A rainbow too is there.

SONNET—NIGHT

List to the wind among the elm trees croon,
Each little leaf she fondles to her breast,
The branches stretch their arms to be caressed,
While from her shutter peeps the virgin moon.
The stars in heaven their golden bugles tune,
To trembling notes that echo down the West,—
And lull the sinking sun at length to rest.
Oh beauteous Summer night of fragrant June
That drawest nigh when Day's long march is o'er,
How welcome is thy sweet serenity.
Effaced beneath thy grave tranquility;
Is all earth's heated clamor, rush and roar,—
The heart reveals its secrets unto thee.
And in thine ear may all its anguish pour.

SPRING'S PROPHECY

With the buds on the trees, and the grass on the hills,
  And robin with lark gaily cheeping,—
With the violets' glad smile and the tune from the rills,
  The heart of the Spring should be leaping.

But I listen and hear as she pipes thro' the wind,
  A wail like a trumpet of warning,—
A low sustained moan that no comfort can find,
  Comes down thro' the dews of the morning.

Is she brooding prophetic, e'en now in her prime,
  Of glories to vanish from sight,
Bridging o'er rosy Summer and ripe Harvest time—
  To Winter's cold silence and night.

For all thro' the sunshine, and rapture, and thrill,
  That pulsate in each living thing,—
A sad undercurrent my ear catches still,
  A sob in the voice of the Spring.

MADELINE

There's a tear on the heather, a sob in the wind,
For Madeline sweet Madeline is dead,—
They have laid her away all with flowers entwined—
With the pansies she loved and bright daisies combined
And fragrant white roses and red.

Like a radiant morning in June she was fair,,—
Her eyes were so bonny and blue,
While in rich wavy masses her dusky brown hair,
Fell about her like shadows that steal in the air—
When daylight to Earth bids adieu.

And there n'er lived a lassie more gentle than she,
Nor one with such meek, timid grace,—
She was like the wee blue-bell that blooms on the lea,
With its head bent so shyly one scarcely can see,
Its delicate beautiful face.

There's a tear on the heather, a sob in the wind,
For Madeline sweet Madeline is dead,—
And the lone, aching heart that remains here behind,
All its love deep and tender must bury enshrined—
Since Life's brightest hopes are now dead.

WHEREFORE

Ah! why must what is beautiful
On earth so soon decay,
And all we love and cherish most
Be quick to fade away?

The summer, with its birds and flowers,
Sheds beauty over all.
It blooms in glory for a while,
Then swiftly comes the Fall.

Joy cannot last, but must give place
To anguish and to pain,
As night succeeds each dawning day
And sunshine yields to rain.

Our golden visions, high ideals,
Oft near and real seem;
Yet, when we try to grasp them, lo!
They vanish like a dream.

But man grows nobler as he strives
For love and truth and right,
E'en though he fail to reach his aim,
Or perish in the fight.

And sorrow, though it wound the heart,
Will peace and comfort bring;
While autumn, with its wreck and ruin,
But paves the way for Spring.

TO A FLOWER

Little flower upon the lea,
Mute I stand and gaze on thee,—
On thy sweet, uplifted face,
Full of tenderest appealing,
Evermore to me revealing
Beauty, matchless power, and grace.

Early dews drop softly down.
Silently thy brow they crown
With a pearly diadem;
And, with thanks by fragrance spoken,
Thou receivest their fair token
Of a clear and sparkling gem.

When dim Twilight, clad in gray,
Soothes to rest the weary day,
Thee I see with bended head,
All thy winglike petals folding;
While kind Sleep her sway is holding,
Till Night's shadowy form has fled.

Meek, white flower, I fain would grow
Pure and free from guile as thou,—
Onward, upward, striving high,
Daily adding strength and sweetness,
Filling up life's incompleteness,
Till I, too, shall droop and die.

MY DEAD

Cease, ringing bells, what can avail
Your constant piteous tones?
My loved one lies there cold and pale
And heedeth not your moans.

Thou sighest too for me, oh wind!
Thou sighest but in vain,
That gentle heart once warm and kind
Knows not my grief and pain.

Forever hushed the voice that seemed
Like music sweet to me,
Forever closed those eyes that beamed
With star-like radiancy.

And every summer blooms the rose
In its accustomed place,
The winter comes with frost and snows
But ah! I miss that face.

Yet though beneath yon lonely hill
Thy form must buried lie;
Thy spirit love, is with me still,
For it can never die.

Thou sleepest there all silent now
While I on earth abide;
And yet, I feel, oh love, that thou
Art ever by my side.

A LEGEND OF WINTER

A stream of raindrops lay on earth,
Quite idly one cold morn,
When suddenly one rose and cried,
"Come, brothers, we are born
For some good purpose, let us rise
And reach out toward the sky,
Nor weary if the road be long,
Nor deem the heights too high."

So one and all with courage rose,
And started their ascent,
The sun looked down with beck'ning rays,
North wind before them went.
Through trackless space these raindrops moved,
Nor ever gazed behind,
Onward and upward still they strove,
Seeking that they might find.

And when they reached the heights at last,
These simple raindrops, lo!
They found they had all been transformed
To beauteous flakes of snow.
Through right good will and patient toil
They had been purified,

And clad in white, with starry crowns,
They roamed thro' heaven wide.

They helped to cheer the cold bare world,
And joy and beauty bring,
And to them was entrusted now,
The guardianship of spring,
In happy bands they floated down,
And made a mantle warm,
To cover and to shelter her,
From any earthly harm.

EVENING AT MUSKOKA LAKES

Hail, oh beauteous Summer night,
Stars are piercing Heaven with light
Hushing moor and hill,—
See the moon her tresses shakes,
On the blue Muskoka lakes,
Solemnly and still.

From the thousand little isles,
Dotting the expanse for miles,
Happy homes peep out,—
Thro' the fir-trees spires breaks
Light upon Muskoka lakes,
Gilding all about.

And the sun flushed in the West,
Seeks his crimson couch to rest,
Lingering on and on,—
So reluctantly he takes,
Farewell of Muskoka lakes
Till the coming morn.

O'er the shimmering waters float,
Many a birch canoe and boat,
    Gliding down the stream,—
Rythmic dip of paddles makes,
Music on Muskoka lakes,
    Life seems one sweet dream.

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